



Should I Use AI for This Data?

A printable reference guide for staff — use alongside the interactive tool at thetadatagoddess.com

Work through the 13 questions below before using an AI tool with any organisational data. For a scored result with personalised guidance, use the interactive version at thetadatagoddess.com. This printable version is designed for team discussions, training sessions, and policy development.

The 13 Questions

Q1

What kind of data are you planning to use?

Think carefully about whether individuals could be identified — even from combinations of details or small cohort sizes.

- No real data — just a hypothetical or made-up example
- Anonymous or fully synthetic data
- Internal business data (not personal)
- Personal data (relates to identifiable individuals)
- Special category or highly sensitive personal data

Q2

What are you using the AI tool for?

The higher the stakes of the task, the greater the scrutiny required.

- Brainstorming or generating ideas
- Drafting or rewriting text
- Summarising documents
- Analysing data
- Classifying or scoring people or items
- Supporting a decision about a person or group

Q3

Which type of AI tool are you using?

Institutionally approved tools are subject to security review. Public tools may process or retain your data in ways that are not transparent.

- Approved internal AI tool
- Enterprise AI tool with organisational controls
- Public AI tool with a logged-in account
- Public AI tool, free or open access
- I am not sure

Q4

Will you enter real data directly into the tool?

Even partial or contextual data can carry risk if it relates to identifiable individuals.

- No
- Yes
- Not sure

Q5

Does the data include any direct identifiers?

Examples: name, email address, staff ID, phone number.

- No
- Yes
- Not sure

Q6

Could the AI output affect a decision about a person or group?

Consider whether the output will inform any action — formal or informal — that affects an individual.

- No
- Possibly
- Yes

Q7

Will a human review the output before anything is acted on?

Human review is essential where output may influence decisions. A light check is not sufficient for high-stakes tasks.

- Yes, with full review
- Yes, but only a light check
- No
- Not sure

Q8

Could the data be retained by the tool or used to train the model?

Check the tool's privacy policy and data processing terms. Free public tools often retain inputs.

- No
- Possibly
- Yes
- Not sure

Q9

Are you confident this use follows your organisation's rules or guidance?

If your organisation has an AI policy or data protection guidance, check it before proceeding.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Q10

How important is accuracy for this task?

AI can produce plausible but incorrect outputs. The higher the stakes, the more important verification becomes.

- Low — rough ideas are fine
- Medium — should be mostly right
- High — errors could cause harm or serious consequences

Q11

Is the data subject to any confidentiality agreement, client contract, or third-party restriction?

Examples: supplier contracts, client data, data shared under NDA, partnership agreements.

- No
- Yes
- Not sure

Q12

Will the AI output be shared outside your organisation?

Any external sharing increases the stakes — especially if the output contains or is based on personal data.

- No, it will stay internal
- Possibly, not yet decided
- Yes, it will be shared with clients or third parties
- Yes, it will be published or made publicly available

Q13

Roughly how much data are you processing?

Large volumes or repeated automated processing significantly increase data protection risk.

- A single document or small amount
- A moderate batch of records or documents
- A large volume, or this will run repeatedly or automatically

How to Use This Tool

Work through all 13 questions for the specific AI task you have in mind. For each question, select the answer that most accurately reflects your situation — not the answer you would like to be true. For a full scored result with personalised recommendations, use the interactive version of this tool at:

data-ai-readiness-check.lovable.app

Understanding the Risk Levels

The interactive tool produces one of four risk ratings:

LOW

0–8 points — Controls appear strong. Proceed with professional oversight and document your rationale.

MEDIUM

9–18 points — Risk indicators present. Seek internal guidance, document your reasoning, and consider whether additional safeguards are needed before proceeding.

HIGH

19–29 points — Significant concerns identified. Seek formal approval, review your organisation's AI and data protection guidance, and consider whether a DPIA is required.

DO NOT PROCEED

30+ points — Stop. Do not proceed without formal institutional approval, a completed DPIA, and governance sign-off.

Always Escalate If...

Regardless of your total score, stop and seek formal approval immediately if any of the following apply:

- Special category or sensitive personal data AND a public AI tool
- Real data entered into a public tool AND no human review of output
- AI output directly influences a decision about a person AND no human review
- Data covered by a confidentiality agreement AND a public tool used
- Output will be published publicly AND personal data is involved

Using This in Your Team

In team meetings

Use the questions as a checklist when a colleague proposes using an AI tool with data. Work through them together before proceeding.

In training

Walk through a realistic scenario using the questions to illustrate where risk appears and why certain answers change the outcome.

In policy development

Use the 13 questions as a framework for your organisation's AI use guidance — they map directly to the key data protection and governance considerations.

As a record

Note your answers and keep them alongside any documentation of the AI task. This supports accountability and provides evidence of due diligence.

Final reflection: If this use of AI were reported publicly, would you be confident explaining your decision-making process? Professional AI literacy is not about avoiding AI. It is about using it with judgement.

This tool provides practical guidance only, not legal or compliance advice. Always follow your organisation's own policies and approval processes. © 2026 The Data Goddess | thetadatagoddess.com